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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA POLITICAL NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2-AUGUST 8

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¶1. (SBU) This was written in partnership with the Open Source Center's Pretoria Bureau. The newsletter is open to contributions from officers in the Embassy or in the Consulates who wish to highlight political trends. Contact Madeline Seidenstricker or Jonathan Smallridge for more information, or to make contributions. The newsletter also is available on the Political Section's blog, "A View from South Africa," found on intelink.gov.

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Domestic News  
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#### Opposition Uncovers Dodgy Government-Sanctioned Arms Deals

¶2. (SBU) Democratic Alliance (DA) shadow Defense Minister, David Maynier, accused the South African National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC) of contravening international law on arms trade. Maynier told Independent Newspapers that the NCACC had authorized, or was in the process of authorizing deals with Libya, Syria, Venezuela, Iran, North Korea, and Zimbabwe, all countries that rank poorly on human rights records. He also accused the committee of violating the Arms Control Act by failing to produce annual reports to Parliament over the past five years. The DA has called on Justice Minister Jeff Radebe, who chairs the committee, to launch an urgent investigation into the deals and halt the export of any military equipment not yet delivered. (The Star, August 3, 2009)

RSA: Government Maintains 'Silence' on DA's Allegations of 'Dodgy' Arms Deals

¶3. (SBU) Pretoria News reports that the government maintained a "stony silence" on allegations by the DA that sales of weapons and military equipment to countries with poor human rights records did not follow the correct procedures. The spokesman for Justice Minister Radebe, the new NCACC chairperson, deferred all comments to the government's chief spokesman, Themba Maseko, who refrained from commenting on grounds that Radebe was out of the country. Parliament's committee on defense and military veterans chairman, Nyami Booie, promised to conduct an investigation into the allegations so as to "shed some light" on the matter. [Pretoria News Online in English -- Website of local daily, privately owned by Independent Newspaper Company; URL: <http://www.pretorianews.co.za/>](Contributed by the Open Source Center's Pretoria Bureau)

Congress of the People Says Talks With RSA Opposition Parties Aimed at Seeking "African National Congress Alternative"

¶4. (SBU) South African Broadcasting Corporation News reports that Congress of the People (COPE) is "engaging" other opposition political parties in an effort to find "common ground" and create an alternative to the ruling African National Congress (ANC) ahead of the 2011 local elections. COPE spokesman, Philip Dexter, said that by talking to other opposition parties, COPE is not admitting defeat

to the ANC. He said that "there is clearly a view among members of all opposition parties that some discussions about initial co-operation and working towards unity as well as forming a new joint party, should be held." He added that these measures are common practice all over the world and have nothing to do with how the strength of any party is perceived. [Johannesburg SABC News in English -- Online news service of the South African Broadcasting Corporation; nominally independent but partially funded by government; <http://www.sabcnews.com>] (Contribution from the Open Source Center's Pretoria Bureau)

Zuma Disperses Media Reports Portraying RSA as State of 'Unrest' Amid Protests

15. (SBU) The South African Press Agency reports that President Jacob Zuma downplayed foreign media reports on the recent service delivery protests which portrayed South Africa as a "country seized with unrest." He said that the gravity of the events had been exaggerated but warned that it was unwise to dismiss them because "they raise important issues." While the president condemned the violence, looting and intimidation that accompanied the protests, saying that law breakers would be punished, he also acknowledged the people's frustration with local councilors who have failed to do their jobs. According to the president, the protests "highlight weaknesses in government institutions" and these must be held accountable for their "shortcomings." He called for greater visibility by all parties within their constituencies and promised that the ANC would perform "an audit" of all its councilors to identify problems and resolve them. [Description of Source: Johannesburg SAPA in English -- Cooperative, nonprofit national news agency, South African Press Association; URL: <http://www.sapa.org.za>]

ANC-Youth League Faces Corruption Charges

16. (SBU) The DA has laid nine corruption charges against the leadership of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) and board members of its investment-wing Lembede Investment Holdings (LIH). The ANCYL

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executive committee and LIH board members are charged with contravening Section 34 of the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act 12 of 2004, which states that it is an offence not to report corruption to the police. This follows media reports that the ANCYL will not take action against individuals implicated in possible fraud and corruption uncovered by a Gobodo audit report that was commissioned last year by ANCYL president Julius Malema. The audit uncovered illegal deals amounting to roughly 30 million USD. (Sowetan, August, 3, 2009)

Minister on a Fact-Finding Mission

17. (SBU) Human Settlement Minister Tokyo Sexwale spent Monday night in Diepsloot, an informal settlement north of Johannesburg. The Minister is on a fact-finding mission to gain a better understanding of the living conditions in informal settlements. During the visit, the Department of Human Settlement had an overnight office in the area for public consultation. Next week the Minister will visit Khayelisha in Cape Town on the same mission. (News24, August 4, 2009)

Public Protector to Challenge the Oilgate Ruling

18. (SBU) Public Protector Lawrence Mushwana is considering appealing against a high court judgment, which set aside the Oilgate report. In 2005, the Public Protector investigated allegations of corruption between the black empowerment company Imvume and the ANC. The scandal involved allegations of irregular payment of R15-million by PetroSA to Imvume Management, with part of the payment - roughly one million USD -- allegedly used by the ANC in the 2004 election campaign. In his report, Mushwana found no evidence of wrongdoing between the parties. However, the North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria set aside the report and criticized the investigation of being inadequate and Mushwana of shielding the ANC. (Mail and Guardian, August 3, 2009)

Police Chief Probes Deadly Force Legality

¶9. (SBU) New Police Commissioner Bkei Cele plans to ask Parliament to amend rules regarding the use of deadly force when the legislature reconvenes this month. He said he would also ask for an amendment of rules regarding search and seize without a warrant and to give police greater powers to intervene in domestic violence. He told Parliament's portfolio committee, the post-apartheid version of some laws forced police to think twice before shooting. Cele said the high number of police fatalities proved that when faced with hardened criminals, they could not afford to hesitate. He said it was up to parliamentarians to "take collective responsibility" to ensure the law was fair and did not afford criminals "greater rights" than their victims. On search and seizure rules, he said the law must change to remove the onus on police to ask permission before entering premises where domestic abuse is under way. He noted, "We have a man [beating] his wife and [police have to say] 'please can I come in?' It cannot be." (Reported by the Times - 6 Aug 2009)

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International News  
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New Diplomatic Deployments

¶9. (SBU) Former Democratic Opposition leader Tony Leon, former Correctional Services Minister Ngconde Balfour, and former social Development Minister Zola Skweyiya have started diplomatic training on Monday as Ambassador designates, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DICO) announced on Monday. Leon is expected to become the South African Ambassador to Argentina, Balfour as the South African High Commissioner to Botswana and Skweyiya as the High Commissioner to the United Kingdom. Pallo Jordan's appointment to the United Nations has yet to be confirmed by DICO. (DICO briefing, August 3, 2009)

Director General to stay on for another three years

¶10. (SBU) Following a Cabinet meeting this week, the Cabinet decided to extend the contract of the current Director General Ayanda Ntsaluba of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DICO) for a further three years. Ntsaluba was appointed as Director General of DICO in September 2003. (Presidency briefing, July 29, 2009)

Zuma's Scheduled Trips Abroad

¶11. (SBU) Zuma postponed a trip to Burundi this week. The trip was to mark the end of the South African National Defense Force (SANDF) peace-keeping operation which was initiated in 2000. No official reason was given by the Presidency for the postponement. In other trips, Zuma will visit Angola on a state visit tentatively from

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August 19 to 21 in order to establish a South Africa-Angola Binational Commission. In September, Zuma is scheduled to pay a state visit to Venezuela, and then to proceed to the United States for the opening of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Zuma Meets Tsvangirai, Promises To Raise MDC's "Complaints" with Mugabe

¶12. (SBU) As reported by Post earlier this week, Zuma met with Zimbabwean Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai in Johannesburg for a briefing on the progress of the unity government established February. Prime Minister Tsvangirai has complained about breaches to the political agreement signed last year between the Zanu-PF [Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front] and the MDC-T [Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai], President Robert Mugabe's tardiness in redistributing provincial leadership, and the arrest of at least six MDC-T MPs. Zuma said that the problems raised in the briefing "don't seem to be issues that cannot be resolved" and he will now contact President Mugabe, the MDC-M leader and regional leaders to brief them on the meeting "with the sole aim of saying how we could continue working together to make quick progress in Zimbabwe." [Pretoria News Online in English -- Website of local daily, privately owned by Independent Newspaper Company; URL: <http://www.pretorianews.co.za/>] (Contributed by the Open Source

Center's Pretoria Bureau)